**Spring Bayou Lake Commission**

The February 2021 meeting of the Spring Bayou Lake Commission was held on March 1, 2021, at the 4-H Building (LSU Ag Center) in Mansura at 6:00 pm. In attendance were Chairman Jimmy Landry, Vice-Chairman Rayford Laborde, Secretary Terry Laborde, Commissioner Artha Hale, Commissioner Roland Dugas III, Commissioner Philip Lamartiniere, Commissioner Jules (JK) Bordelon, Commissioner Mayor Kenneth Pickett, Police Juror Bobby Bordelon, Mr. James Franks, and Mr. Ronald Coco. Commissioner Jacques Goudeau was absent.

Chairman Landry called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm then led the group in the prayer and pledge of allegiance. Commissioner Lamartiniere presented a motion to accept the minutes of the previous last meeting, Vice-Chairman Laborde made the second, and the minutes were accepted by a unanimous vote.

After a brief discussion Commissioner Mayor Pickett made the motion that the commissioners should meet every two months and that this meeting should count as the February 2021 meeting. Secretary Terry Laborde added the second to the motion and it was accepted by a unanimous vote.

It was the last issue of the meeting, but the issue of littering drew the most concern and interest from the commissioners. It was noted how the sides of highways and roads and wooded areas have become increasing an eyesore with litter. The Avoyelles Police Jury is actively seeking a resolution to this with the use of Justices of the Peace. The commissioners were presented with a sample "Litter Court" resolution in reference to Louisiana Law, RS 13:2586, by Chairman Landry. It begins by defining littering and give authority to a Justice of the Peace to have concurrent jurisdiction over the litter violations occurring in Avoyelles. The Avoyelles Police Jury had adopted the "Avoyelles Parish Litter Reduction Ordinance in October of 2002 giving them authority to create a "community service litter abatement program" and collect fees. In a motion by Commissioner Dugas and the addition of a second by Commissioner Lamartiniere, the commissioners unanimously approved the resolution to be sent to the Avoyelles Police Jury that the Spring Bayou Lake Commission supports and encourages the Avoyelles Parish Police Jury to continue their efforts in the battle against litter in Avoyelles parish the establishment of the "Litter Court" system. The vote was unanimous.

Chairman Landry updated the commission on the repairs to the Spring Bayou dam which has begun to leak over the previous months. DOTD checked the leaks, and it was determined welding would not help so the Avoyelles Parish Police Jury piled rocks on both sides of the dam. There are still pinhole leaks, but the dam is "not anticipated to blow out".

James Franks updated the commissioners on the improvements to the pavilions and floating docks at Old River. A track hoe was used to partially dredge by removing the old dock at the Old River landing near Mansura. The water levels had come up and the work was postponed for now. A price tag of $35,000.00 was given. In response from a question by Vice-Chairman Laborde, Chairman Landry said the floating docks go straight out from the land by 30-feet then extend another 10-feet out at approximately a 45-degree angle.

Juror Bobby Bordelon updated the commissioners on the no-wake buoys at the Bay-Sec landing. Juror Bordelon stated that three buoys had been placed at the landing to slow the speed of the boats near the landing. The regulation states that there is a no wake zone in effect for 300-feet in either direction of any landing. He stated that tickets have been issued.

Ronald Coco discussed the rationale for the sign placed in the center of the loading ramp at the landing at Bordelonville.

Chairman Landry updated the commissioners on the efforts by our two representatives Darryl Deshautelle and Heather Cloud in their efforts to secure funding to repair and/or replace the road from the cattle gap to the old golf course. He said they were requesting $2 million from capital-outlay. The road is owned by the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries.

Chairman Landry explained that an application has been submitted again for dredging and CPRA oversees all basin activities. We are in the north corner of the basin area.

Chairman Landry explained that there are four projects in discussion in the Louisiana Water Initiative projects. The Chatlin Lake Canal-Bayou Choctaw project along with the Boggy Bayou dredging projects are the priorities to assist the development of Spring Bayou. The other two projects (Mills Bayou and Bayou Des Glaise) are viewed as less concern and probability of funding. The Spring Bayou Lake Commission had submitted a project that was absorbed by the Avoyelles Police Jury to dredge the Chatlin Lake and Choctaw Bayou canals. Pan American Engineers has begun work on the project. Commissioner JK Bordelon explained the role of the diversion canal and his view that the project should be removed from our list of projects. He expressed his view from landowners and farmers to cut a 3-mile-long canal from the Monofil Road. It is their opinion that this would be most effective. Commissioner JK Bordelon also expressed his view that a major concern is the lack of maintenance due to filling-in and vegetation growth in the present drainage system should be addressed before attempting new projects. Commissioner Lamartiniere updated the commission on the flow of water from surrounding parishes in and out of Avoyelles. Vice-Chairman Laborde expressed his concern that the restriction of the flow of water will back-up into Spring Bayou and this may result in the flooding of camps. Chairman Landry agreed with this insight as water from the Alexandria area flows down the Chatlin Lake Canal into the Choctaw Bayou at the "T" and into Bayou Du Lac or Spring Bayou. An explanation was given on the rationale to use pumps on the levee on the southern edge of Alexandria that could pump excess water out of the Chatlin Lake Canal when needed due to flooding in the Alexandria area, but the reversal could happen to use the same pumps to pump water from the Red River into the Chatlin Lake Canal to send water to Spring Bayou in dry months. Chairman Landry said this rationale is being used to attempt to secure funding. James Franks added his thoughts on gates off the Red River in the Poland area could assist water getting into Spring Bayou, but it was noted that there is opposition from Wildlife and Fisheries due to the possible introduction of invasive species.

Chairman Landry updated the commission on the successful test of the opening and closing of the gates on the Spring Bayou dam. The gates are on property owned by Commissioner Dugas but are owned and operated by the Avoyelles Police Jury. A discussion ensued with Juror Bordelon on a policy being established to open/close the gates. Commissioner Dugas noted how a flood as in 2011 caused the water to flow backwards over the gates and into Spring Bayou eliminating the effectiveness of the gates. James Franks noted the gates could assist in times of a hurricane to lower the level of flood waters in Spring Bayou. Commissioner Dugas did voice his opinion that the gates could assist in a drawdown. Juror Bordelon added that the first question that would arise is the drawdown itself and the rationale by the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries. Commissioner Artha Hale added that the number one priority before anything else can be accomplished is to dredge Boggy Bayou. He noted that at a water level of approximately 39.25-feet of elevation the water stops flowing over the "hill" where Boggy Bayou meets Little River. Commissioner Dugas along with others voiced opinions that the dredging is the priority. A sample resolution was drawn up, but the ensuing discussion was in favor to hold attempts to pursue the development of the plan for now.

Discussion then ensued on the weed problem in the complex. It was noted the grass eating carp are begun to near the end of their lifecycle and along with the carp, spraying has been effective but costly. Commissioner Dugas recommended that Biologist Jody David be contacted and present a presentation on behalf of Wildlife and Fisheries. Other commissioners echoed the request. Ronald Coco added how a "mat” developed in the sloughs and around downed cypress trees after natural events causing some sloughs to never dry in the summer. Commissioner Dugas made the motion and received a second to postpone the resolution to request a plan of action be formulated until Biologist David gives his presentation.

With no further business, Commissioner Artha Hale presented a motion to adjourn at 7:28 pm. Vice-Chairman Laborde second the motion and it was unanimously voted upon.

Submitted by Terry J Laborde, Secretary, Spring Bayou Lake Commission